

REMARKS

The office action of June 12, 2009, has been carefully considered.

It is noted claims 1-4, 6-11, 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over JP 07-275920 to Fukaya et al.

In view of the Examiner's rejections of the claims, applicant has amended claims 1 and 9.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims presently on file differ essentially and in an unobvious, highly advantageous manner from the constructions and methods disclosed in the reference.

The reference of Fukaya et al. has been discussed at length in previously filed amendments and those comments are incorporated herein by reference. The following additional comments are provided.

The independent claims have been amended to be limited to only plasma descaling and/or plasma cleaning. Fukaya et al. on the

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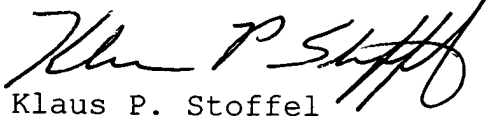
other hand carry out sand blasting of the strip in addition to descaling of the electrodes. Thus, the presently claimed invention is distinguishable from the teachings of Fukaya et al.

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 1-4, 6-11, 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the above-discussed reference is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

Any additional fees or charges required at this time in connection with this application may be charged to Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 11-1835.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, PO Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on December 14, 2009.

By:


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Date: December 14, 2009